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PP RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHNR #2780/01 3501602  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 151602Z DEC 08  
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7931  
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 7442  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHMFIUU/CJTJF HOA  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 002780

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR AF/E  
USUN PLEASE PASS A/S Frazer and AF/E-Garey

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PINR](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - December 16 International Contact Group Meeting  
in New York

REF: A) Nairobi 2776 B) Nairobi 2755

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The December 16 International Contact Group (ICG) session comes at a critical time in the history of the TFG. A protracted fight between President Yusuf and Prime Minister Hussein took a further nosedive December 14, when Yusuf attempted to dismiss the Prime Minister. The Parliament December 15 in turn rebuffed the President with an overwhelming vote of confidence for the Prime Minister, leaving the ball in the resourceful Yusuf's court. There is a growing consensus that an exit strategy must be devised for Yusuf, who has become an obstacle to the Djibouti Process. ARS Chairman Sheikh Sharif and more than twenty of his confederates put their thumb in the eye of ARS-Asmara and al-Shabaab by moving to Mogadishu --for good, they say-- in order to continue the work of the joint High-Level and Joint Security Committees. The new unity government faces many obstacles, including steady al-Shabaab gains on the ground, too much debate about legalisms and parliamentary etiquette, and not enough about making its presence felt in Somalia. The international community wants a Somalia success story, but there is clear fatigue after years of failed reconciliation efforts. The SRSG has injected much energy into the process, but does not always communicate well with international community colleagues, and has not offered a roadmap for the way forward. End summary.

Yusuf - Nur Adde Feud  
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¶2. (SBU) The December 16 ICG session occurs against the background of continued rivalry between TFG President Yusuf and Prime Minister Hussein that led Yusuf, on December 14, to issue a decree removing Hussein. On December 15, Yusuf's efforts ran aground in Parliament, which gave the Prime Minister a 143 - 20 vote of confidence (Ref A). The ball is now in Yusuf's court, and rumors have it that he may retire to Garowe to lick his wounds and contemplate revenge.

¶3. (SBU) The Yusuf - Hussein feud has distracted the TFG from efforts to advance the Djibouti Process. While the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) Chairman has brought a group of twenty ARS members permanently to Mogadishu in an effort to advance the work of the High-Level and Joint Security Committees, the TFG has watched its already negligible presence in Somalia dwindle further. At present, it holds sway over small pockets of Mogadishu and the parliamentary seat of Baidoa only.

Exit Strategy for Yusuf  
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¶4. (SBU) Yusuf is an obstacle to the Djibouti Process, and debates about whether he should be in or out of the tent no longer seem

relevant. With the most recent episode with the Prime Minister, there is consensus among Somalis and the international community that Yusuf has become an impediment to any progress. SRSG Ould-Abdallah, who several weeks ago appeared to be seeking an exit strategy for Yusuf, as of December 5 appeared to be making efforts to keep the President in the process. Yusuf's effort to oust Hussein appears to have exasperated the SRSG, who appears prepared again to consider an exit strategy for the President.

15. (SBU) Observers continue to caution that the President must be given an honorable exit. They point out that many of his Darod clan parliamentarians sat out the December 15 vote in Baidoa; unable to join forces with the President, yet unable to cast a vote against him. Any ouster that would too openly humiliate Yusuf would spark resistance from his clan.

16. (SBU) Although members of Yusuf's inner circle, and key members of his clan talk regularly of an endgame for Yusuf, they have to date been unwilling to confront him. It would be useful to have the ICG consider an exit strategy for Yusuf under the ICG agenda's Overview of Somalia section.

#### Creating a Unity Government

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17. (SBU) The November 25 Djibouti communique called for the creation of a working group that was to have reported within thirty days on the communique's provisions for establishing a unity government. To Embassy's knowledge, that committee has not been created. Many Somalis believe that the recommendations of the High Level Committee (HLC) are to be implemented as outlined in the November

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25 communique. (Note: The HLC recommendations were designed as a basis for debate and eventual adoption within parliament and to date, they have not been formally discussed in that forum). The recommendations include doubling the Parliament, extending the Transitional Federal Institution's mandate for two years, and considering the election of a new TFG leadership. Doubling the Parliament to accommodate the ARS is unpopular even among those MPs who support a unity government. The ARS appear to have signaled flexibility on the issue, but negotiations do not appear to be underway.

#### Ceasefire: No Movement

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18. (SBU) The TFG - ARS October 26 cessation of armed confrontation agreement has been rendered largely irrelevant by advances that al-Shabaab and other armed groups continue to make (reftel B sketches the current disposition of forces). Al-Shabaab's gains have left the ARS confined to parts of Hiraan, Gedo, and Galgaduud regions, while those TFG forces who have not defected are to be found in close proximity to ENDF forces in Mogadishu and Baidoa.

#### ARS In Mogadishu

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19. (SBU) ARS Chairman Sheikh Sharif sees the Government of Ethiopia's departure as key to an enhancement of his credibility. He, and members of the TFG, are lobbying for international community help in creating and financing a unity government security force, in order to give them a footprint. The Joint Security Committee convened in Kenya from November 20-24 to flesh out the modalities for a cessation of armed confrontation and developed a comprehensive proposal for this joint security force. This force would have a unified command and integrate ARS loyalists into the Somali Police Force and prepare for an eventual national armed forces under the terms of a comprehensive peace agreement. We are working with the AU and other key actors to develop a flexible financial management mechanism for non-traditional and international donor contributions to pay these unified forces.

110. (SBU) Sheikh Sharif's December 11 arrival in Mogadishu, with more than twenty members of the ARS who relocated from Djibouti in tow, shows that he is willing to put his thumb in the eye of ARS-Asmara. Sharif's Mogadishu presence has drawn a response, from

statements to the press by ARS-A Chairman Hassan Dahir Aweys, to ARS-A attacks in Mogadishu they day after the ARS-D delegation's arrival. The residents of Somalia's capital have offered an outpouring of support. Still, the unity government's armed forces pose no threat to al-Shabaab's and others in Somalia, and absent a willingness by the international community to train and finance them, they

#### The International Community

¶11. (SBU) Among the international community, there is an emerging consensus that Yusuf is an obstacle, but there has been no effort to forge a unified strategy. The December 17 ICG might offer an opportunity to discuss that, and chart a way forward for the Djibouti Process. The SRSB has contributed much energy to the process. He is widely respected by Somalis across the spectrum, and has been at pains to repair his relations with the Government of Ethiopia. SRSB Ould-Abdallah has had less time to convey his vision of the way forward to the international community; an oversight that can be addressed during the ICG.

RANNEBERGER